



# NEWS

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **PLAN OUTLINES WAYS TO PROTECT LIVES, PROPERTY FROM WILDFIRES IN AUSTIN, TRAVIS COUNTY**

**AUSTIN, TX...**The Austin/Travis County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), a document that provides strategies for both homeowners and wildfire officials to help avert a wildfire catastrophe, became official today, Nov. 14, in a signing ceremony with Travis County, the City of Austin, and the Texas Forest Service.

Travis County Judge Sam Biscoe, Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell, Texas Forest Service Director Tom Boggus, and Austin Fire Chief Rhoda Mae Kerr signed the document that identifies proactive measures to protect life, property and natural resources from wildfires.

The plan is not regulatory, but instead provides a data-based roadmap for community action. The CWPP is an umbrella document for municipalities and neighborhoods throughout the region to develop neighborhood- and city-specific wildfire mitigation plans and programs.

Officials also unveiled an interactive website, [www.austintexas.gov/wildfireprotectionplan](http://www.austintexas.gov/wildfireprotectionplan), where residents can type in an address and find out the wildfire risk for their home. A downloadable copy of the CWPP is also available at the site.

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“Wildfire is everybody’s fight – not just the first responders at the local fire station, but everyone who lives in all parts of Travis County,” the planning document concludes. “No citizen gets a pass on fighting wildfire, no matter where they live in Travis County.”

The plan not only looks at risks for homes abutting woodlands in western Travis County, but addresses the dangers of brush fires in residential areas in eastern and other parts of the county, which have traditionally been underserved due to a misperception of low wildfire risk.

Officials listed these quick tips for protecting yourself and your home against wildfire:

- Defend your home from wildfire by creating 30 feet of defensible space.
- Make your home less vulnerable to flying embers by cleaning out gutters and removing debris from your yard.
- Reduce the risk of wildfire within your neighborhood and community by becoming a FireWise community.
- Prepare and practice home evacuation in case it becomes necessary.

The Austin/Travis County Community Wildfire Protection Plan is part of a national effort to have local communities develop cohesive strategies for fire-resilient landscapes; effective and efficient firefighting forces; and Fire-Adapted Communities.

A Fire-Adapted Community recognizes an area where the potential for a wildfire already exists and has taken appropriate actions to ensure that a wildfire will not necessarily be a catastrophic event.

City of Austin and Travis County officials formed a Joint Wildfire Task Force after the 2011 Labor Day fires that ravaged not only Bastrop County, but parts of Travis County including Steiner Ranch, Spicewood, and Oak Hill.

The Joint Wildfire Task Force, working with a consultant, served as a resource and review panel for the Austin/Travis County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.